



Trail Talk

Mission Trails Regional Park Trail Guide Program

Trail Talk Volume 14, Issue 5

My Week at the American Wilderness Leadership School by Linda G. Hawley, Trail Guide

In July of 2009, the San Diego Chapter of Safari Club International (SCI) awarded me full sponsorship to attend a summer workshop for educators in their American Wilderness Leadership School (AWLS) at Granite Creek Ranch, Jackson, Wyoming. This was a great experience!

Stepping off the plane in Jackson Hole was the first thrill—seeing the Grand Tetons from the tarmac! After a 33-mile ride to the camp, the second thrill was gazing at the magnificent vistas in the beautiful Gros Ventre Range of Bridger-Teton National Forest. Steady rains all of June delivered lush, green vegetation, spectacular wildflowers, and snow-capped mountains. Grazing deer and moose 20 feet away, comical calls of Sandhill cranes, “chiselers” (Uinta squirrels) popping in and out

of their holes and Snowshoe hares hopping around us made for terrific outdoor education!

Of the 28 participants in this workshop, I was the oldest

tion, Outdoor Survival Skills, Stream Ecology, Archery, Fly Fishing/Casting Techniques, Bugs & Fly Tying, Firearm Safety, Shooting Skills, Outdoor

Recreation Ethics, and presenting lessons from Project Wild and other curricula, went from 7:30 AM until 8 PM everyday. We also made field trips to the National Elk Refuge and land management agencies. As fantastic as this week

was, it was clearly not meant to be a vacation! SCI Foundation’s purpose in sponsoring people to attend these workshops is to enlighten us so we can educate others to understand the sports-person’s role in wildlife conservation and management and clarify misconceptions.

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and one of the few who’d never been fishing or hunting. These educator-students came from all over North America, and taught children of all grade levels and subjects. Our instructors also had diverse backgrounds, from college professors to retired fish and game wardens; all were avid outdoorsmen. Classes in Wildlife Ecology and Conserva-

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Writers wanted...

- Have an interesting story or photo you’d like to share with other Trail Guides? Send them to ‘Trail Talk’ editor Millie Basden at trailtalkeditor@yahoo.com. Please include “Trail Talk” in the subject line!

Speakers Needed...

- Have you heard an interesting speaker or know an interesting topic that would be appropriate for one of our monthly meetings? If so, please send your ideas to Brian or Ondina Moehl.



Next Trail Guide
Monthly Meeting:

Wednesday,

May 12th

6:30 pm—

Visitor Center
Classroom

Explore Mission Trails Day

Join park staff and volunteers on Saturday, May 15, 9 a.m.—2 p.m. for an all day celebration highlighting everything Mission Trails has to offer! Free guided nature walks, talks and programs throughout the park. Visit mtrp.org for all the details.

Monthly Meeting Minutes—April 14, 2010

There were 50 Trail Guides, 2 guests, and Ranger Heidi in attendance.

Fred's number for April was 428. The answer in the form of a question is "How many species of spiders are there in San Diego County?" This number was taken from the checklist of spiders on the San Diego Natural History Museum web site: www.sdnhm.org/research/entomology/sdspider.html (The speaker later provided a more up-to-date number of 437.)

Fred reminded Trail Guides to sign up for walks and record the number of visitors and some interesting observations from the walk, including how visitors learned about the walk.

Fred announced the prize winners for the best walk write-up in March: Donna Jensen and George Varga for their special walk on March 21.

Ranger Heidi discussed two activity boards she had created for use at MTRP outreach tables.

Fred thanked Jeanne Raimond for her

great display on tree swallows in the front kiosk and mentioned that volunteers are needed for the July–September and later displays.

Fred reminded Trail Guides that they need to carry an 800 MHz radio when they lead walks from the Visitor Center that start and end while the Center is open. He said that the radios should not be held by the antenna and must be returned to the cabinet after the walk. Ranger Heidi provided complete training on use of the radios after the meeting.

Fred also reminded Trail Guides of the requirement for live-scan fingerprinting.

Fred announced that an updated Trail Guide directory would be forthcoming.

Linda Hawley gave a brief summary of AWLS, which she attended last summer.

Fred reviewed the new walk sign-up policy: Trail Guides can only sign up for two regular walks (the 9:30 a.m. VC walks or the 8:30 a.m. KLC walks) in

any future month. Once that month comes, however, then it is first come, first served. The restriction does not apply to special walks.

Fred mentioned that he and Ranger Heidi were still working on starting discovery tables.

Chris Axtmann reported she was going to update and correct MTRP listings on the new Events Calendar on the Signon San Diego web site.

Program was a presentation on San Diego Country spiders by Jim Berrian from the San Diego Natural History Museum.

Upcoming Events

The next meeting is May 12, 2010, 6:30 p.m. in the Visitor Center classrooms. The program is TBD.

Explore Mission Trails Day is Saturday, May 15, 2010, 9 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda L. Kramer, Secretary

Leadership School

(Continued from page 1)

Prior to my week at AWLS, I was unaware that wildlife conservation and management is primarily paid for in the US by license sales to hunters and an 11% federal excise tax on arms, ammunition and related hunting materials. Therefore, SCI argues, hunting is a viable wildlife management tool. If hunting "goes away", who will pay for conservation? Hunting and fishing is in decline; wildlife watching is going up. In 2006, anglers and hunters together spent \$98.1 billion, while wildlife viewers spent \$45 billion. Where hunters spent \$.7 billion on licenses, tags and permits, wildlife watchers spent next to nothing on entrance and park-

ing fees. In California, sportspeople's annual spending is greater than the cash receipts of the state's grape crop (\$3.6 billion vs. \$3 billion) and they support more jobs than the 32nd Street Naval Station in San Diego (53,500 vs. 43,000). Our instructors continually stressed the importance of practicing safe, ethical, moral, law-abiding hunting. When I asked, hunters said the kill is the least pleasurable part, that it's the whole experience they enjoy—the year of preparation, honing the shooting or bow skills, camaraderie, the walk in the woods, joy of being outdoors, perhaps a quiet prayer showing gratitude to the animal as the native peoples did, and finally, eating preservative-free, herbivorous meat.

"Want and Waste" is illegal in every state; lawful hunters do not waste any game killed; they harvest the old and weak, leaving the young and fit to reproduce.

I came away with a fresh perspective and newly found respect for hunters and their support of wildlife management. Any trail guide can attend an Educator Workshop! Even if you don't agree with their agenda, you'll have an opportunity to SEE and learn about the flora and fauna; catch a sunset after hiking up the West Ridge (elev. 10,300), and end the week with a FUN white water rafting ride on the Snake River! For more information, visit www.safariclubfoundation.org.



WHO AM I? by Millie Basden, Trail Guide

Can you identify this person who is connected with MTRP?

- He once held a job in mining and exploration.
- Upon seeing a photo of a tall man on a small donkey, he was inspired to write a song.
- Some would say his alter ego is a raccoon.

Answer on page 4

Trail Guide Trek to Tierrasanta by John Hopper, photo by Fred Kramer, Trail Guides

Saturday April 10, 17 Trail Guides with family and friends got together for a Trail Trek in Tierrasanta. We started down the South Rueda Canyon Trail a little after 9:30 AM, with a red-shouldered hawk either welcoming or warning us to stay away. The morning was a little overcast, just right for a hike. We heard or saw, towhees, wrentits, California Quail, and an occasional gnatcatcher. We also located a trap door spider's home.

There were a lot of wildflowers and shrubs in bloom. Blue eyed grass, wild hyacinth (blue dicks), common vervain, hedge nettle, deer weed, black sage, California and San Diego sunflowers were just a few of the many plants that were identified.



After completing our 2½-mile trek, we ended up at Roadrunner Park for a picnic lunch. Everyone enjoyed this hike so much that we have decided to schedule

another before the flowers all fade for the summer. Our next Trek will be to the San Diego Audubon's Silverwood Wildlife Sanctuary, Sunday, May 2nd.

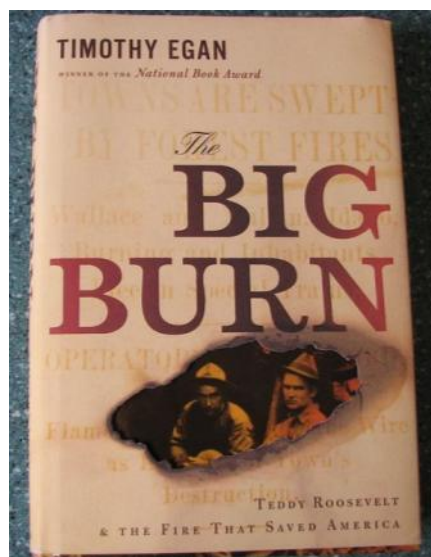
Book Review: *The Big Burn* reviewed by George Varga, Trail Guide

The Big Burn by Timothy Egan is a fascinating book to read even though it does not directly involve Mission Trails Regional Park nor its flora and fauna inhabitants. The book is about the 1910 Wildfire, known as the Big Burn or the Big Blowup, that consumed over 3 million acre of forest in Washington, Idaho, and Montana and killed almost 90 people, of which over 70 were fire fighters.

The conflagration was the result of many factors including severe drought, the avarice of timber, mining and railroad magnates, the lack of support by Congress, sparks from locomotives on tracks cutting through the forests and a series of lightning strikes. The author goes into great detail about the Robber Barons, men of great wealth and influence with members of Congress, who carve up large portions of the public lands in the West for personal profit and gain. Countering the Robber Barons are persons known today for their efforts at conservation. Among them are Theodore Roosevelt, John Muir and Gifford Pinchot, who eventually became the first Chief of the U.S. Forest Service.

During the great fire millions of acres burned, towns were reduced to ash. Many residents perished in spite of heroic efforts on the part of the rangers of the Forest Service who were authorized by Congress but with meager funding for their salary, clothing and some-

times even their tools. The author brings to light the efforts by the Buffalo Soldiers made up of African-American Army Soldiers, in saving the white population of Wallace, Idaho. Their actions are on the level of professional-



ism and determination, in the face of rampant discrimination, with that of the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II.

The author describes many heroic efforts put forth by men and woman during the fire but perhaps the one that grabbed my attention was that of Ed Pulaski who joined the fledgling Forest Service in 1908. Pulaski was the son of Polish immigrants though many at the

time claimed that he was a descendant of Kazimierz Pulaski, a General in the Continental Army, during the American Revolution. Ed Pulaski is credited with saving his fire crew of 45 when they were overtaken by the 1910 Wildfire. He also developed what today is known as the Pulaski, a combination of an axe and a mattock in one tool, and the main firefighting tool when fighting forest or open range fires.

After the Big Burn was over, controversy raged over how to protect forests against fire. On one side were advocates for allowing fires to follow their natural course as it was considered that fire was very much part of nature. On the other side were those who felt fires should be fought vigorously and suppressed. Railroad, timber, and mining interests were very much on the side of suppression to protect their investments. In the end it was decided that the U.S. Forest Service was to prevent fire and to fight every wildfire.

For almost a century the suppression of fires was paramount. Smokey the Bear became an icon. Today the controversy continues and the sentiment is shifting to allow fires to burn where life and infrastructure are not threatened. Prescribed burns and managed fires are advocated to allow for the clearing of the fuel load and prevent devastating fires like the 1988 Yellowstone Fire.

What's Happening at the Park

Saturday, May 8...

Project Athena Race 5K & 10K Hike/Run/Walk—The inaugural AKALI Project Athena Racing Series will kick off at 7 a.m. The event begins at the Equestrian Staging Area off SR 52 and Mast Blvd.

Friday, May 14...

Stars at Mission Trails—Join members of the San Diego Astronomy Association from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Kumeyaay Lake Campground's Day Use Parking Lot. Telescopes available (weather permitting.)

Saturday, May 15...

Guided Bird Walk—Join Trail Guides Millie Basden and Peter Thomas for an adventure in bird watching! This month: Kumeyaay Lake—meet at the campground day use parking lot. 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Explore Mission Trails Day—Join MTRP staff and volunteers for the celebration from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. highlighting all that Mission Trails has to offer!

Concert in the Amphitheater—Patrick Henry High School will have two outstanding ensembles performing. 3–4 p.m.

Star Party—Join resident stargazer and Trail Guide George Varga to view the sky. During Explore MTRP Day, view sunspot activity from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Visitor Center Terrace. From 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. view Saturn and Mars and various galaxies, meeting at the far end of the Kumeyaay Lake Campground Day Use Parking Lot. (Weather permitting.)

Saturday, May 29...

Birding Basics—Resident birder Winona Sollock will teach 5 simple techniques for identifying birds at a glance. 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., Visitor Center

Saturday, June 5...

Tracking Walk—Join MTRP Trail Guide and Tracking Team member Mike Gibbs and discover signs left behind by resident creatures. Kumeyaay Lake Campground, 8:30 a.m.

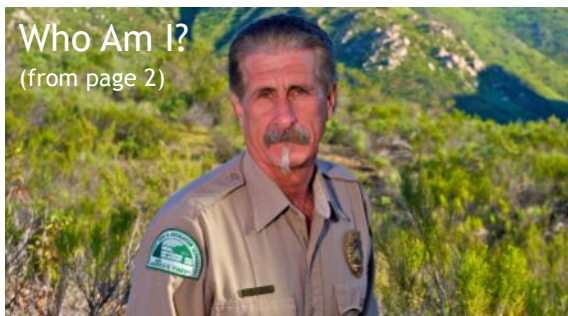


There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but Nature more.

~ George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

Who Am I?

(from page 2)



Senior Ranger Rick Thompson, shown here, is the person described on page 2. He previously worked at MTRP, and has held various positions within the San Diego Park and Recreation Department Open Space Division. He began working in the private sector in mining and exploration. When between jobs, a surfing buddy commented that he would make a good ranger and that was the impetus for a change in careers. In addition to MTRP, he has worked at Torrey Pines State Reserve. And he still loves to surf at a north county break.

His favorite musical instrument is the mandolin, and he likes to play blue grass, country, and songs he composes, like the one inspired by a photo of a tall man on a small donkey.

The raccoon connection has probably already occurred to most readers. In 1967, the National Wildlife Federation debuted its nature magazine for children, called "Ranger Rick" which features a raccoon wearing a park ranger's hat in a story in each issue. NWF's Ranger Rick, along with his friends Scarlett Fox and Boomer Badger, work together to solve problems they encounter in nature.

We are fortunate that MTRP once again has its very own Ranger Rick who along with our other rangers will work together to solve problems and to improve upon MTRP's programs. To that end, Ranger Rick said that he values the contributions of trail guides, in particular, our efforts to keep people on the trails in the park, and our observations and reports to the staff of anything we see that can be improved.



If you can't do a walk you signed-up for, arrange for someone to take your place or let Fred or Ranger Heidi know you won't be there.

Mission Trails Regional Park Trail Guide Program

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Trail Talk Production—Tom Walters
Trail Talk Distribution—Ed Bailey
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The Trail Guide Program is dedicated to provide the visiting public with education and understanding of the unique environmental and historical attributes of Mission Trails Regional Park. The Trail Guides supplement the Park Rangers in outreach programs to the public.

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